

REMARKS

Claims 2-5 and 7-8 are pending in the application. By this Amendment, claims 2-3 have been amended, and claims 9-12 have been added. It is submitted that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated January 26, 2010.

Claim Objections

Claim 2 is objected to as including informalities.

This objection is respectfully traversed. Claims 2 and 3 have been amended to overcome this objection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 2-4 and 7-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Oki (JP 53115640) in view of Wegener (U.S. Patent No. 6,601,426).

This rejection is respectfully traversed. Claim 2, as amended, now calls for the feature of “*wherein the radial-direction position adjusting structure includes one end facing the first piping, wherein the radial-direction position adjusting structure includes a guide roller provided at the one end thereof, and wherein the guide roller makes a rolling contact with a circumferential surface of the first piping.*” Independent claim 3 also has been amended to include the similar feature. This amendment is supported by, for example, Figs. 1, 2 and the specification (page 10, lines 3-10).

None of the Examiner's cited references of Oki and Wegener discloses or suggests the above amended feature. Therefore, even if, assuming *arguendo*, that Oki may be combined with Wegener in the manner suggested by the Examiner, such combination would still fail to disclose or fairly suggest the claimed feature of "*wherein the radial-direction position adjusting structure includes one end facing the first piping, wherein the radial-direction position adjusting structure includes a guide roller provided at the one end thereof, and wherein the guide roller makes a rolling contact with a circumferential surface of the first piping,*" as called for in amended claim 2 and similarly in amended claim 3.

Accordingly, claims 2 and 3 as well as their dependent claims patentably distinguish over Oki and Wegener.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Oki in view of Wegener in view of Schadler (U.S. patent No. 6,825,438) (Previously cited).

This rejection is respectfully traversed. Claim 5 is dependent from claim 2 or 3 and recites the additional features set forth therein. Accordingly claim 5 also distinguishes over Oki, Wegener and Schadler for at least the reasons set forth above.

New Claim

The subject matter of new claims 9 and 10 is supported by, for example, Figs. 1, 2 and the specification (page 10, lines 3-10). The subject matter of new claims 11 and 12 is supported by, for example, Figs. 1, 2 and the specification (page 10, lines 18-21). New claims 9-12 are

dependent from claim 2 or 3 and recite the additional features set forth therein. Accordingly claims 9-12 also patentably distinguish over the cited references for at least the reasons set forth above.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP

Tsuyoshi NAKAMURA /

Tsuyoshi Nakamura
Limited Recognition No. L0396
Telephone: (202) 822-1100
Facsimile: (202) 822-1111

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